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THE NEGRO IN THE NEW DEMOCRACY

By George W. Ellis, K.C., F.R.G.S.

The story of what is called Negro emancipation is one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of human liberty. The last semi-centennial year marks one of the two greatest triumphs in American progress—the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation. By one America was liberated from political tyranny and despotism from without; by the other she was freed from the baleful political doctrines and social practices of master and slave from within. So that every citizen should rejoice, not so much that the Negro was liberated, as that the whole nation—white and black alike—was suddenly moved immeasurably forward for all the races of men on the highway of social progress and civic freedom.

It would be exceedingly difficult to estimate the intellectual, social and moral benefits which emancipation has conferred upon the white citizens of the United States, no less than upon the black. And while we remember that in different ways as in slavery both races suffer still, we rejoice today for the victories of the past as we renew our inspiration for the triumphs and conquests of the future. What is going on in one of our middle west states is interesting to the lovers of social progress.

Chicago is the second city of the continent and in many respects one of the greatest cities of the world; situated on the southwest corner of Lake Michigan, the greatest grain, live stock, railway and lumber center in the United States with the greatest meat packing plant in the world; stretching 30 miles along the lake and with 130 square miles in area and a population of 2,500,000 of all races, speaking 40 languages, with 20 papers in foreign tongues, and divided by the Chicago River very much like Paris is divided by the Seine, Chicago is the most cosmopolitan

of American cities. Here an experiment in democracy is illuminating and encouraging for all classes and races of men.

And it is a significant fact that the first settler in Chicago was the Negro, Jean Baptiste.

THE SPIRIT AND INFLUENCE OF LIBERTY

The citizens of Chicago stand for liberty; and liberty is among the dearest possessions of the soul. To be free indeed is the highest attainment and reward of discipline and self-government. The liberty to labor, to possess, to enjoy, to grow and to contribute one's best toward social uplift and progress, are all dear to Chicago citizens.

The same spirit which enabled the Barons of England at Runnymede to wring from King John the first great bulwark of modern liberty; the same spirit which sustained the peasants in the tempestuous tumult of the French Revolution which stained the sunny hills of France with royal blood that the nation might be free; the same spirit which inspired Kossuth of Hungary, Cavour of Italy, Cobden and Bright of later England, and which sustained Washington from the Boston massacre to Yorktown and consoled Lincoln from Harper's Ferry to Appomattox; by that same spirit of liberty the citizens of Chicago have resolved to keep Chicago free, not merely free for white men but free for black men and all mankind.

THE DAWNING OF THE NEW DEMOCRACY

History and experience show that there can be no liberty and freedom without self-government. True democracy is self-government, the highest and best form of social and political control. No matter how ignorant or how wise as Lincoln said: "No man is good enough to govern another without his consent."

Any group of men excluded from participation in their government are soon given an inferior status in the community and ultimately abandoned to the dependent classes, unable to protect their rights, their property or their homes and are the constant prey of the more favored and ruling

members. So that any government which establishes dependent and inferior classes, whether by race or otherwise, is an aristocracy by whatever other name it may be called. And the essence of all aristocracies is that some sow and work while others reap and enjoy. By the same principle that the highwayman, through fear and force, robs his victim, in aristocratic governments and regimes, the politically favored classes use the functions of government and the organs of society, to exploit and rob on a large scale the subject and dependent classes. For these and other reasons the history of the modern world is chiefly the tragic struggle of men in different countries to establish democracy, as the best protection of their liberty and the surest guarantee of their property, opportunities, destiny and lives.

For these reasons the citizens of Chicago are firm in their attachment to the principles of democracy and grant to the Chicago colored people a greater participation in the city government than the white people in any other American city.

THE FOUNDATION OF TRUE DEMOCRACY

The citizens of Chicago believe not only in liberty and democracy for all men and races, but in universal education as the safest and surest foundation for the highest possible civic and social achievements. They understand that all men regardless of race do not understand the true mission of democracy, and the proper exercise of the franchise. They know that some white men and some black men mistake license for liberty and that the true exercise of freedom is vouchsafed only to the cultured classes. They know too that there can be no true democracy without universal and the highest education. Chicago adopts the view that it is a natural right of man to govern himself and to participate in his government. That regardless of race no man because of ignorance should be excluded from the franchise. That society is largely responsible for man's ignorance and that the greater his ignorance, the greater is the duty of society to educate him in right conduct and good citizenship. So that in Chicago we are actualizing

the true American ideals of equality more than other large cities, with the children of all races attending together the common and higher schools and with a larger number of colored teachers than is to be found in the mixed schools of other cities.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO POPULATION

The Chicago spirit for liberty, for democracy and universal education is not to be entirely credited to white Chicago, for colored Chicago has been an important factor in this promising situation. I understand New York with nearly 92,000 colored people has only 1 colored patrolman, while Chicago with 44,000 has something like 125 ranking as high as lieutenant.

Nine cities exceed Chicago in colored population. Because of no political representation Washington, D. C., is excluded. But the remaining eight cities have no colored representation in the state legislature.

New York.....	92,000
New Orleans.....	89,000
Baltimore.....	85,000
Philadelphia.....	85,000
Memphis.....	52,000
Birmingham.....	52,000
Atlanta.....	52,000
Richmond.....	47,000

Four of these cities have more than double the colored population of Chicago. Two of these are in northern states, one in a border state and the other in the far South. The only four with only a few thousand more colored people than Chicago are also in the South, where conditions are abnormal.

In only a few northern states have the colored people been able to send a representative to the legislature. They sent several from Boston, one from Parsons, Kansas, several from Philadelphia, and several in Ohio, among them a state senator, John P. Green.

But long after this representation disappeared Chicago colored people kept a representative at Springfield. A few

years ago they demanded and secured another and now have two.

Chicago colored people keep a member on the County Board, the highest political body in Cook County. It is common now to have assistant states' attorneys and assistants in the city law department, there being now three lawyers and one chief investigator. We have a number of probation officers and countless clerks in the other branches of the local and Federal service. The manifestation of race prejudice over the country in recent years became so pronounced that the Chicago colored people became aroused and for their protection and welfare they rose up and selected one of their number to represent them in the Chicago City Council.

They are now beginning to demand representation in the State Senate and on the Chicago School Board and it is thought by many that the next colored congressman at Washington will come from the black belt of Chicago.

Attention is called to these considerations only to show that the colored citizen has and is contributing much to make Chicago the best place in America for the colored man as well as the white.

THE NEGRO'S PLACE IN HISTORY

It is encouraging to remember that the Negro has an honorable place in history.

Professor Franz Boaz of Columbia University, New York, speaking of the white race said:

When our own ancestors still utilized stone implements, or at best, when bronze weapons were first introduced, the Negro had developed the art of smelting iron; and it seems likely that their race has contributed more than any other to the early development of the iron industry.

Professor Sergi of the University of Rome in his work, *The Mediterranean Race* and Professor Ripley in his *History of the European Races* present a wealth of facts showing that a Mediterranean race of which the Negro was a branch, rather than the Aryan, or white, gave to the world the

beginning in art, science, astronomy, mathematics and religion.

Count de Volney, more than a century ago in his *Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires* pays a splendid tribute to the Negro people of ancient Thebes in these positive words:

There a people now forgotten, discovered, while others were barbarians, the elements of the arts and sciences. A race of men, now rejected from society for their sable skin and frizzled hair, founded on the study of the laws of nature those civil and religious systems which still govern the universe.

Professor Eckler in his preface to Volney's work makes this startling confession:

A voluminous note, in which the standard authorities are cited, seems to prove that this statement is substantially correct, and that we are in reality indebted to the ancient Ethiopians, to the fervid imagination of the persecuted and despised Negro, for the various religious systems now so highly revered by the different branches of both the Semitic and Aryan races.

And we now know that what is called the Aryan or white man's civilization in its first principles was worked out by black men in the Negroland and Kingdom of Meroe in Africa in the valley of the Nile and transmitted to Ethiopia, thence to Egypt and from Egypt to Greece and from Greece to Rome. Listen to what Hoskins says, a noted traveler and Egyptologist:

According to Keeren, Champollion, Rosellini and other eminent inquirers, whose judgment was confirmed by my own observations, this was the land whence came the arts and learning of Egypt and ultimately of Greece and Rome derived their origin. In this remarkable country we behold the earliest efforts of human science and ingenuity.

It is hardly necessary to say that the worthy representatives of such antecedents are now leading their race to its proper place among the modern races of our day.

THE EXAMPLE OF NOTED NEGROES

Aside from the Negro's contributions to civilization the shining example of distinguished Negroes through the

centuries demonstrate beyond debate the natural and potential possibilities and equality of the Negro races. The possibilities of races are shown no better than in the attainments of their great men.

Beginning with Negro Kings and Queens of Egypt, one of the five poets of Damascus was a Negro, Nasseyeb. When ancient Japan was conquering the Ainu people of northern Asia the Japanese army was led by a noted Negro general, Tamuramoro.

Napoleon had a celebrated Negro general in his army, Alexander Dumas, who went with Bonaparte to Egypt and distinguished himself in the Army of the Alps. Henry Diaz, who drove the Dutch from Portuguese America and won distinction as a military leader, was a Negro general. The man who freed the slaves in Haiti against the colonial avarice of England, Spain and Napoleon in France, and who proved himself one of the greatest generals and statesman of the world was Toussaint L'Overture, a Negro, and of whom Wordsworth sang:

There's not a breathing of the common wind,
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

Whittier referred to him as born in slavery and,

Casting aside the weary weight,
And fetters of its low estate,
In that strong majesty of soul,
Which knows no color, tongue or clime,
Which still hath spurned the base control
Of tyrants through all time.

Hannivaloo of Russia, decorated with the red ribbon of the order of St. Alexander Neuski and whose son became lieutenant-general of artillery and who built the harbor and fortress at Cherson was a Negro, and his granddaughter was the mother of Alexander Sergeivich Pouskin, one of Russia's greatest poets.

He who built the modern empire of Abyssinia, who defeated the Italians at the pass of Adowa and kept his people free from the colonial control of Europe was Memelik, a

Negro Emperor of the only independent government in Africa except Liberia.

The man who first commanded the allied forces in the Boxer rebellion in China was Alfred Amedée Dodds, a Negro general of the French army and who was born at Senegal in West Africa.

Oge', who led the revolt of the colored people in Santo Domingo and who died on the wheel for the liberty of black men as John Brown died on the scaffold, was a Negro. In efforts to force him to give the names of his accomplices his trial was delayed by his executioners and he was tortured and persecuted for two months. He urged his execution by these intrepid words:

Give up all hope, give up all hope of extracting from me the name of one of my accomplices. My accomplices are everywhere where the heart of man is raised against the oppressors of men.

THE NEGRO IN ART AND LITERATURE

By nature, the Negro is a natural artist. The paintings of Henry O. Tarnier, a Negro artist, decorate the art galleries of Europe and America. Ira Aldridge, a Negro tragedian, in *Othello* and other Shakespearean tragedies, won such distinction that he was decorated by a number of the crown heads of Europe. The sculpture of Meta W. Fuller and Edmonia Lewis, two colored Americans, recall the figures and forms of love and awe which adorned the Grecian Parthenon. J. Rosamund Johnson, Will Marion Cook, Harry Burleigh and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, have charmed and entranced the lovers of music of all races in almost every section of our earth. L'Islet Geoffroy, as a member of the French Academy of Science; James E. J. Captain, versed in Greek, Hebrew and Chaldean and as a writer of elegies and dissertations in Latin; Anthony William Amo, as philosopher and professor in the University of Wittenberg; Don Juan Latino, as professor of Latin in the University of Granada; Ahmad Baba of the African Sudan, as author of more than twenty books on law and science; Abderrahman Sadi of Timbuctu, Africa, as the writer of *Tarik a-Sudan*, now being translated by Professor Hondas

of the University of Paris; besides many others worthy of mention to say nothing of our scholarly W. E. B. Dubois, W. S. Scarborough, W. H. Ferris, C. G. Woodson, William Stanley-Braithwaite, Booker T. Washington and Kelly Miller are more than sufficient to show the work of the Negro in literature and in the highest and purest scholarship.

FIFTY YEARS OF NEGRO PROGRESS

Increasing from 4,000,000 to 10,000,000 in population the progress of the Negro in the United States in fifty years has startled the world. He has accumulated 400,000 homes and farms and in personal and real property over \$1,000,000,000. Beginning as an ignorant servant he has differentiated into over 220,000 owners of farms, 300,000 skilled workmen, 75,000 in professions, 30,000 in business, 23,000 in the Federal service, 6000 authors of books, more than a 1000 inventors, and in education he has reduced his illiteracy to 30 per cent. With 70 banks, 30,000 teachers, and 3,000,000 Negroes in the public schools, colleges and universities of the country, against great odds, the American Negro with invincible tread is marching toward self-development and group consciousness onward and upward to the glorious heights of a man's place in the new American democracy.

And as he scales the fortified and tangled peaks of race prejudice and discrimination, as he looks out upon bespan-gled plains and verdant meads, where summer's sun sifts through interlacing boughs, where soft and sombre zephyrs sigh and music-throated birds enchant the listening air, I fancy I can hear him exclaim:

When foes upon me press, let me not quail
Nor think to turn me into coward flight,
I only ask to make my arms prevail,
Strength for the fight.